What is Risk Communication?

- An interactive process of exchange of information and opinion among individuals, groups, and institutions. It involves multiple messages about the nature of risk and other messages, not strictly about risk, that express concern, opinions, or reactions to risk messages or to legal and institutions arrangements for risk managers.

- National Research Council, Committee on Risk Perception and Communication

What is Risk Communication?

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- Building and maintaining relationships based on the effective exchange of technical and/or scientific information between concerned stakeholders about an actual or perceived risk.

- Risk Communication Team, U.S. Army Center for Health Promotion and Preventive Medicine

What is Risk Communication?

- A science-based approach for communicating effectively in:
  - High concern
  - Low trust
  - Sensitive or
  - Controversial situations.

- Vincent Covello, Center for Risk Communication

Gaining Trust and Credibility

- Difficult to gain and easy to lose. Most important factors are:
  - Empathy
  - Caring.
  - Personal Commitment.
  - Honesty
  - Openness.
  - Expertise.

Risk Communication History

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- Risk communication dates to 1980s.
- Interact with communities or groups.
- Concern about health, safety, or environmental dangers.
- Perception of peril to selves and especially to children.

Seven Rules of Risk Communication

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- Rule 1. Accept and involve the recipient of information as a Legitimate Partner.
- Rule 2. Plan Carefully and Evaluate Performance.
- Rule 3. Listen to Your Audience.
- Rule 4. Be Honest, Frank, and Open.

Seven Rules of Risk Communication

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- Rule 5. Coordinate and Collaborate with other Credible Sources.
- Rule 6. Plan for Media Influence.
- Rule 7. Speak Clearly and with Compassion.

Narrowing Risk Communication

- Until recently, risk communication techniques were used with groups and communities.
- In a clinical setting, risk communication is used with very small groups or individuals.
- Building trust and credibility is still the heart of risk communication.
- Listening is half of communication.

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- Empathy
- Non-confrontational
- Validate
- Inform
- Take action
- Enlist cooperation

Summary

- Clinical risk communication involves low trust-high concern situations.
- Trust and credibility are the heart of risk communication.
- Value your patients views and beliefs.